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2/18/03
Date

PATENT

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant: Michael J. Romine
Serial No.: 09/821,618
Filed: March 29, 2001
Examiner: Koch, George R.
Art Unit: 1734
Confirmation No.: 4107
Title: **FLOATING HEAD LIQUID DISPENSER WITH DISPENSING HEAD
SENSOR**
Atty Docket: NOR-979

Cincinnati, OH

February 18, 2003

Assistant Commissioner of Patents
Washington, D.C. 20231

Sir:

RESPONSE

This Response is submitted in reply to the Office Action mailed on November 22, 2002. Claims 1-10 are pending in the present application as claims 11-19 have been withdrawn from consideration pursuant to a restriction requirement raised by Examiner. In view of the following remarks, Applicant respectfully submits that this application is in complete condition for allowance and request reconsideration of the application in this regard.

Claims 1, 2, 4-7, 9 and 10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Rutledge et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,391,387. Claims 3 and 8 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Rutledge in view of the Anorad Brochure. Lastly, claims 5, 6, 9 and 10 stand alternatively rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rutledge and further in view of Ng, U.S. Patent No. 5,820,623. Applicant respectfully traverses these rejections for the reasons set forth below and requests that the rejections be withdrawn.

Examiner will note that each of independent claims 1 and 7 is directed to a floating head liquid dispenser for dispensing liquid onto a substrate. As fully described in Applicant's disclosure, the floating head dispenser includes a support member which is mounted for movement toward and away from the substrate. A liquid dispensing head is operatively connected to the support member and is capable of movement relative to the support member upon contact with the substrate. The liquid dispensing head has a liquid flow path extending therethrough which terminates in an outlet for dispensing fluid onto the substrate. In accordance with the principles of the present invention, a linear displacement sensor is operatively connected to the support member and the liquid dispensing head such that the linear displacement sensor is capable of generating a signal that indicates the sensed displacement of the liquid dispensing head relative to the support member.

By contrast, Applicant respectfully submits that the dispensing system in the primary Rutledge et al. reference is a pivoting fluid dispenser, and is clearly not a floating head liquid dispenser as understood by those of ordinary skill in the art and as recited in each of independent claims 1 and 7. In Rutledge et al., the dispensing gun (610) is mounted to pivot about an axis G-G to dispense sealant to non-circular closure members (500). The dispensing gun (610) of Rutledge et al. does not contact the closure members (500) during a dispense cycle. The Rutledge et al. dispensing system includes a support and drive assembly (630) having a roller (694) which is moved in opposite linear directions as indicated by the arrows (632, 634) as shown in Fig. 19. The roller (694), in turn, is captured within a slot (616) of a cradle member (604). Movement of the roller (694) in the opposite directions (632, 634) causes the lower portion of the dispensing gun (610) to pivot about the axis G-G (see Column 17, lines 20-34).

The support and drive assembly (630) of Rutledge et al. includes a sensor mechanism (674) and tape scale (672), which, in combination, comprise a sensor assembly (668). In operation, the sensor mechanism (674) determines the position of a movable sensor bracket (670) relative to a stationary sensor mechanism (674) (see Column 17, line 67-Column 18, line 4). The sensor assembly (668) detects the position of the sensor bracket (670) relative to the stationary sensor mechanism (674) and, thus, the dispensing system of Rutledge et al. is able to determine the relative position of the roller (694) and, accordingly, the

direction and degree of pivoting of the dispensing gun (614) (see Column 18, lines 30-34).

Applicant respectfully submits that Rutledge et al. taken alone, or in combination with the other prior art of record, fails to teach or suggest the combination of elements recited in each of independent claims 1 and 7. In particular, Rutledge et al. fails to teach or suggest a support member mounted for movement toward and away from the substrate as recited in each of independent claims 1 and 7. Rather, the support and drive assembly (638) of Rutledge et al. is mounted for linear movement in opposite directions parallel to the closure member (500) and not toward and away from the substrate as recited in each of independent claims 1 and 7. Additionally, the dispensing gun (610) of Rutledge et al. is not capable of movement relative to the support and drive assembly (630) upon contact with the closure member (500) as recited in each of independent claim 1 and 7. Applicant respectfully submits that the dispensing gun (610) of Rutledge et al. does not contact the closure member (500) during a dispensing cycle, but rather pivots about the axis G-G to dispense sealant onto the closure member (500) in response to movement of the support and drive assembly (630) and associated roller (694) as described in detail above.


Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that Rutledge et al. taken alone, or in combination with the other prior art of record, fails to teach or suggest the combination of elements recited in each of independent claims 1 and 7 and the

rejections should be withdrawn. Moreover, as claims 2-6 and 8-10 depend from allowable independent claims 1 and 7 respectively, and further as each of these claims recites a combination of elements not taught or suggested by the prior art of record, Applicant submits that these claims are allowable as well.

If there is any issue that may be resolved by telephone conference, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned in order to resolve same and expedite the allowance of this application.

Respectfully submitted,

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